New York Dec 29 57

Prof. Asa Gray

Dear Sir: We have yours of 24th but have not yet read the MS. In reference to the book — premising that our suggestions are made with diffidence & solely from the business side of the case — we would say: There is danger that the new book will be too much like the Lessons — in arrangement, as well as price. It ought not to be possible to substitute it for the Lessons — the style, manner, scope & level of the book ought to be so sensibly more juvenile, simple, superficial outlinish & elementary, that it will never occur that they can be used into it agreably. It ought therefore to be smaller & less, & cheaper. Besides, the Series as a whole, is already large, and to add two new vols, to it we fear, frighten off a class of teachers & pupils from it by its mere size & cost. To be successful as a juvenile work — besides the simple style &c — it should be small & cheap. We think, as before stated, that it ought to be of a size that would enable us to sell it at a good profit for 50c retail. Of course then, it should not extend to 2 vols. And since the matter has been under consideration, we have made more close estimates of cost, and decidedly think the book should not exceed 200 pages, of type mentioned, with long primer & minion type. If it can be brought within that space, & meet at all, your views in respect to it, it will be a very great advantage. It occurs to us (tho' of course we have no advice to give) that if the first part could be made even more brief, and cursory than you propose — merely touching upon the great outlines, without minute detail, & thus leave full space for the English Flora, it would be well. With your high ideal, there is no danger of getting it too meagre or superficial: the tendency will naturally all be the other way. We should be glad if you could get it within the 200 pages. Your proposal respecting cuts is entirely satisfactory: though of course, we should wish you to have as many new ones as are necessary — since it is best to have a thoroughly good book while about it. The size of type, long primer & minion, pleases us. If you should prefer to have electrotyped in Cambridge, we should not object if terms are fair. We hear nothing of the printing of the Text Book: and are waiting for it. The Young Botany should be commenced soon. Hoping to receive news soon, we are Very Truly Yours &c Ivison & Phinney